

Appl. No. : **10/729,026**
Filed : **12/5/2003**

REMARKS

By way of summary, Claims 4 and 7-19 were pending in this application. Claims 4 and 8 have been canceled. Claims 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17 have been amended. Claims 20-32 have been added. Accordingly, Claims 7 and 9-32 are pending for consideration. No new matter has been inserted through these claim amendments and additions.

Allowable Subject Matter

Examiner objected to Claims 9, 12, and 14-19 as being dependent on rejected base claims but indicated these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have amended Claims 9, 12, 14, 15, and 17 to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 16 and 18-19 depend from Claims 15 and 17 respectively, and are allowable for at least the reasons that each of their base claims is allowable.

Applicants have amended Claim 7, 10, 11, and 13 to each depend from one of Claims 9 or 12. Therefore, applicants submit that Claims 7, 10, 11, and 13 are allowable for at least the reasons that each of their base claims is allowable.

Newly added Claims 20-32 each depend from one of Claims 9, 12, 14, 15, or 17 and further define the invention recited in the base claim. Therefore, Claims 20-32 are allowable for at least the reasons that each of their base claims is allowable.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that in light of the Examiner's previous indication of allowability, Claims 7 and 9-32 are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections

The Examiner rejected Claims 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Aldea. Applicants have canceled Claims 4 and 8. As discussed above, Applicants have amended Claims 7, 10, 11, and 13 to depend from allowable base claims. Therefore, Applicants submit that Examiner's rejections of these claims are now moot and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections and the Examiner's assertions regarding what the prior art shows or teaches, even if not expressly discussed herein. Although

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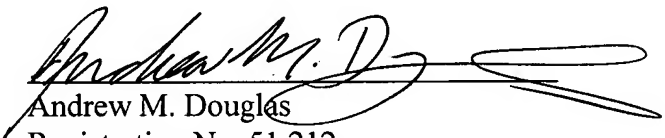
changes to the claims have been made, no acquiescence or estoppel is or should be implied thereby; such amendments are made only to expedite prosecution of the present application and are without prejudice to the presentation or assertion, in the future, of claims relating to the same or similar subject matter.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request that a Notice of Allowance be issued at the earliest opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

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